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Culture as Seduction: Some Liquid Modern Propositions on the Palette of Imagination of Tourism

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Title: Culture as Seduction: Some Liquid Modern Propositions on the Palette of Imagination of Tourism

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Session Type: Presentation

Abstract:

This presentation is the second of two cousin working papers (see Suleman & Hollinshead, this abstract book) on the condition of culture under globalisation and the interweaving of populations. It focusses upon the altered function of culture under liquid modernity and (like presentation 1 of 2) it constitutes a contextual application (to Tourism Studies) of the ideas of the social studies theorist Bauman.

Initially, in this second presentation, a number of points from presentation 1 of 2 will be situated within Tourism Studies. The following three questions will be particularly stressed:

A = Under the globalising imperatives of liquid modernity, the so-called modern condition of cultural life loses its old solidities and dissolves into a litany of molten or limpid forms (p. 11). None of these emergent and flowing / running cultural forms is generally able to maintain its shape or condition for long, and local / national life becomes increasingly dissolved and impermanent (p. 12). What does this therefore mean for the representational power of Tourism Studies?

B = Under the globalising actions of our contemporary age, the molten and limpid forms of social life which emerge and flow exist as cultural mutations which find their own unpredictable level in and across societies (p. 88). Their respective life courses tend to be vicissitudinous, and most tend to be definitive, fixed, irrevocable (p. 88), having blurred boundaries with other cultural forms (p. 90). What does this mean for the relationship Tourism Studies supposedly has with other so called inscriptive / performative fields?

C = Under the globalising imperatives of liquid modernity, cultural value / cultural importance is often something bestowed via the imprimatur of a promoted or heralded 'event' (p. 112). In this fashion, such events are prone to be loudly projected / multimedia attention-makers, but they are 'one-off' or 'short-lived' culture-generating / behaviour-stimulating spectacles, generally orchestrated in harmony with a perceived resonance with the supposed / claimed spirit of the times (p. 113). Such culture-creating events are designed for maximal impact, yet instant obsolescence, and their providers are inclined to avoid the obligation of long term investment (p. 113). What does this mean in terms of what is and what is not commonly and critically researched in Tourism Studies today?

Thereafter, this second presentation will focus upon the provision of five propositions to help guide researchers of and about the parameters of culture in Tourism Studies ... in relation to the above three questions:

Proposition 1 = Visions of Culture Not as Essentialised Objects but as Ongoing Processes

Considerable gains can be made in Tourism Studies by viewing culture not as a fixed or

essentialised set of objects but as an ever-dynamic realm of processes

Proposition 2 = Visions of a More Provisional Global Order

Considerable advantages can accrue to Tourism Studies researchers who are open to a more contingent and less authoritative view of and about the global order of things

Proposition 3 = Visions of Plural Knowability

Considerable benefit—in terms of equity and creative opportunity—can result for governing bodies in tourism management and development who are alive to (become aware of) the hegemonic understandings they uphold in their day-by-day / quotidian acts of promotion

Proposition 4 = Visions over Cultural Poesis as well as over Cultural Politics

Considerable dividend can ensue for researchers in the social science field of Tourism Studies (who have a large mandate for matters of culture) when they turn their disciplinary / crossdisciplinary attention towards ethnoaesthetic meanings

Proposition 5 = Critical Visions of the Worldmaking Power and Compass of Tourism

Considerable interpretive gains can result for the field of Tourism Studies when ‘it’ indulges in many more robust and penetrative and many more nuanced and refined critical studies of the effectivities (and thereby, the worldmaking agency) of tourism

All citations (above) are from the work of Bauman (2012), as commissioned by the National Audiovisual Institute for the European Cultural Congress, based in Wroclaw, Poland.